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UNIVERSALITY THE GROUND IDEA IN ETHICS.

The goal of all our thinking is some form of unity. Our data are always manifold, at least as soon as we actually become conscious of them; and the invariable impulse, whether in the service of practical ends or of theoretical ideals, is to seek their unity. Both science and philosophy embody this impulse. Science has glorified as its supreme achievements such approximations to unity as the laws of correlation of energy and indestructibility of matter. Philosophy may almost be defined as the search for the one in the many; and some form of monism has always been esteemed to be philosophy *par excellence*. We must believe that this native and inexpugnable impulse of our thought is in the deepest sense a copy or image of the real ultimate character of the universe. We strive for unity and the bond of things because the whole is one, and we belong to the one. In the terms of mysticism or devotion, we are simply yearning back toward our origin in the Divine Unity.

The idea of universality as the fundamental conception of all ethical truth seems to grow upon one as he contemplates more and more widely the field of ethical life. This idea is foreshadowed in the earliest and most elementary formulas of moral precept, negatively in Cain's guilty and bitter question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—which the very asking shows to be no question, but rather a revolt and impotent opposition against what broke even upon a half savage mind as truth. All the precepts of moral sages, even the earliest, contain a central core of universality; just as all are summed up in the Hebrew "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and the word of the greater Hebrew, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

Ethical universality may be presented under three phases, those of *law*, *interdependence*, and *love*.

Law is the form in which universality first comes to consciousness in the race. Duty, righteousness, the moral life, are first entirely matters of law. This deed is right because it fits the eternal sanctions, the other is wrong because it contradicts them. Nay, right appears in a yet more primitive form than that of eternal and divine sanctions, namely the law of the king or chief, the expressed will of a seen and directly known power. But the idea of law soon transcends this particularity, as it must, by its very nature, transcend every limit to its inner and essential universality; and law presently

stands not for the will of any individual man, not even the king, but for the will of the eternal and all-ruling deity, for the "Thus saith the Lord!" Just here we must note, after Hegel, that the mere historical growth of this stage of universalization is of no fundamental interest. No doubt we may speculate that the law of the king's will passed through the death and apotheosis of the king into the law of the invisible and eternal One. The mere path by which law travels from its incipient imperfection and particularity towards its real and ultimate universality is of no deep import; it could as well, we must suppose, have taken a thousand other routes. The vital thing is the destination, or perhaps we should say the direction, of the movement.

The deepest essence of law in all its formulations and on all its stages is universality. We must not suppose that the lower forms of law are marked by any other distinguishing feature; it is always universality which makes law. A law in morals is something which is valid for you and for me, and for all others who are not explicitly exempted; that is, who do not escape from the law by some element in their relation to it. The imperfection in the law affects only the degree of scope of the universality; a lower form of moral law is due to a lower degree of insight. The earlier law exempts the king and the nobles, not by attacking the law itself, but by elevating the aristocrats above its reach, that is by marking them not mere men, but in a sense divine. Higher civilization consists in closer scrutiny of these claims to exemption. In fact, the very exemption is of the essence of the law, and so cannot injure its universality.

The sanctions of a law are at first inarticulate. That is, the moral stage in which morality is embodied in laws is, as it were, the childhood of moral theory and practice. Two great difficulties arise: first, that of the injustice of laws in their particular application, or rather the injustice of the formulations of the laws to which men have attained. Such knots arise most abundantly in even the earliest stage, when the king's word is law. The king pronounces, and alas! the law falls with fatal effect upon his friend or favorite; as, for example, in the myths of Jephthah or Daniel. Or laws seem to clash in irreconcilable opposition, as in the Antigone. From all this, repeated a thousand times, arises suspicion and not seldom revolt; an example of the latter is one element of the Greek sophists. And this leads to the second great difficulty as to laws, the inquiry into their *sanction*. It is evident that so long as the king lives, or belief in the divine author of laws is unshaken, no such inquiry can

arise; but the invisibility of the author, and more especially the conflict of the laws stimulates doubt and scrutiny. This inquiry leads to many forms of theory for sanction. We are here concerned with two ideas which seem to us representative of all that can be adduced in defence of laws, or rather of morals, and which are of the essence of the universality which is the basis of the laws and of the greater morality which is shadowed forth in the laws. These two ideas are interdependence and love. Both of these may be described as facts; both are in part and originally data; but they are both in need of enlargement and extension by means of postulation, or we may say faith, before they can function as sanctions in any complete manner.

First, then, interdependence.

If two things lie under one law they must exist under some common condition or in some organic relation. Interdependence emphasizes the organic relation; indeed it might be called interaction, for we soon learn to seek and find in all relations of interdependence an underlying, half hidden interchange of force or energy. Even relations apparently inert, as a stone resting upon the earth, turn out on scrutiny to be most attractive. Every molecule of stone and soil is thrusting and struggling, and what seems mere one-sided and stolid dependence is really an active and mutual interaction.

Now all our growing knowledge of the universe is an increase in our knowledge of interaction. Every new fact of science is a new piece of interaction. This is eminently true in anthropology in the large sense of the term,—the study of physiology and psychology lead to embryology and heredity, and to sociology. Body and mind are transformed by thought. What but now seemed to be stark individuals turn out to be of one piece and texture with all being, and in momentary commerce with all the elements. Consider the body. There it stands, erect, touching the earth but lightly, moving freely from place to place, leaping, walking, running. But take away for one instant that most universal of all laws of matter, gravitation, and that body, which seemed so self-sufficient, would do we know not what,—burst, dissolve, dissipate, without that pressure of the air, thrusting fifteen pounds upon every square inch, it could not hold together. Air to breathe and food are only less instantaneous, not less imperative indispensables. Indeed, when we call in chemist and physiologist to instruct us, we learn at once that the body is part and parcel of the great machine of the physical universe and is in constant, never-relaxing interaction of force and motion with the

world of nature. Its very constituent molecules are in momentary flux to and from the surrounding air and space.

Only more fascinating and convincing is the study of the real status of the man,—more strictly speaking, the inner man or mind. A glance at one's own soul reveals no isolated individual. I find in *my* mind father, brothers, wife, friends, home, country, and the heroes and sages of times past. I perceive that were it not for Homer and Socrates, Shakespeare and Bunyan, Lincoln and Gladstone, to say nothing of names less shining but more familiar and intimate, I should simply not be! It would actually seem that the interaction of the physical world has risen to a higher stage here, it has become *identity*. The old hero said, "I am a part of all that I have seen." In truth, we are all composite of all that we have seen, and chiefly, so far as we are men, and not mere intellects, we are made up of those souls whom we have known.

This is the indispensable foundation for any ethics. If a man were an isolated, self-complete and self-sufficing thing, walking apart, as it were, there were no conceivable reason in ethical relations or moral obligation. Only because we are all of one piece, of one stuff, in ceaseless and deep-seated interaction, are we bound by common law of mutual obligation.

But if the social body had been compelled to depend upon the intellectual conception of interaction and mutual dependence for a system of morality and righteousness, there never would have been any social system, and that for two reasons: first, the knowledge would have come too late, or rather, it could not have come at all; for such high intellectual progress is possible only after the long process of actual moralization of society, and hence as a consequence of that for which it is proposed as a basis. In the scheme of things another agent was provided, namely the immediate perception or sensation of the identity between each man and his fellows. This agent we call love, or sympathy. Here we may remark that all through the history of the science of ethics, while the sages have been engrossed and too often disputing over the philosophical sanction of morality, the saints, of all types, eminent, and obscure, in caves and hermitages, or in the maelstrom of life, have been calmly and completely assured, in heart and life, if not in intellect, that this love is the all-sufficient guarantee of all the moral laws. And since they found love among the all-certain things in their inmost hearts, they have not been anxious to base it upon any philosophy, but have rather built their philosophies, if any, upon the datum of love; or

at the very least, have required the theory of being to square itself by the principle of life.

To return to the disabilities of the theoretical knowledge of interdependence,—we have said that this knowledge would have come necessarily too late, being itself one of the fruits of a social state already well developed. Its other disability is just as complete—it is utterly impotent to do the work. It is an intellectual conception, and as such it lacks the very driving force which is indispensable in a sanction; not indeed in a philosophical sanction, whose only function is to explain, but in a practical sanction which need not so much explain, indeed does not explain in any scientific sense, but must *impel*. We have called love the sensation or perception of the social interdependence or identity, but it must be remembered that this agent is like all sensations commonly so-called, essentially *motor* in its nature. It impels, often with only the vaguest and most obscure illumination of the reason. It has its first origins and shows all its essential qualities in those blind instincts of the mere animal, like mother love in bird and beast.

We cannot but wonder at the comparative neglect which the philosophical moralists have shown toward love. Perhaps we may not blame the ancients, since the practical idea of love was so imperfectly developed, and we must agree with Hegel that no philosophy can anticipate its own time. But surely the ethical thought of the Christian era should have penetrated more deeply into the nature and ethical function of this central ethical experience,—for such love is, all apotheosis of duty to the contrary notwithstanding, even that of the immortal Kant included. The practical moralists, the saints properly and broadly so-called, have recognized the principle, as we have already remarked.

We would not pretend to any deep or final utterance on this great theme, but must add one word of supplement and as it were correction to what we have already said of love. We have called it the immediate perception of our mutual dependence and identity, but really it *is* that very dependence and identity,—as indeed every perception *is* the thing perceived. Love is the bond or unity of which all laws of morality and all formulas of universality are partial struggling expressions.

We may venture then, in conclusion, to indicate in such vague manner as is possible the relations of the three forms or phases of universality: law, interdependence, and love.

Law is the striving of the human spirit to set forth and express

in terms of conduct, of practical reason, to use the honorable and useful Kantian term, the inner, real unity of human beings. Its essence is always this universality; its accidents are the effect of varying degrees of insight into the meaning and validity of the terms in which the law is expressed; especially in its interpretation of external and individual human relations to which the law must take attitude.

Interdependence is the conception of the unity after the type of our intellect; that is, in terms of the speculative reason. Hence this conception is much influenced by the methods and ideals of our general science and philosophy. This conception sets the type for all really explanatory ethics. It seems clear that no theory of duty and the moral law can be competent which does not construct some consistent and reliable conception of unity among those who are mutually bound by the chains of duty.

Love is the reality of which these, law and interdependence, are formulas and theories; or in another view love is the immediate gift or knowledge of the reality, a gift without which the very beginnings of moral and social life were unthinkable.

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THE ENDEMIC RELIGIOUS INSANITY OF THE ISLAND OF ST. VINCENT.

In the island of St. Vincent, West Indies, has been prevalent for some years a system of religious exercises practiced by a sect commonly called the "Shakers." The devotees speak of themselves as the "Converted" or the "Penitents."

It must be understood that these people do not profess or hold any distinctive doctrines. The fundamental idea of their worship is the necessity for "Conversion" in the sense taught by the Wesleyans, Salvation Army, Plymouth Brethren and other allied forms of Christianity. They do not aim at establishing an independent sect, nor do they count themselves as separated each one from his Church.

The chief teacher, Brother Ragguet, expressly repudiates such an idea. He preaches repentance and contrition, but directs every one to cleave to his own religious body. He holds that all churches are true except that of the Seventh Day Adventists, whom he calls